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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence

29 May 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

North Vietnamese Truck Losses
Since 31 March 1968*

Summary

This memorandum analyzes the effects of the US bombing program since 31 March in terms of effective losses** inflicted on the North Vietnamese truck inventory. Truck losses since 31 March have been double the weekly rate observed during the first quarter of 1968. More than half of the estimated losses were in Route Package 1. The increase in truck kills is due to the more intensive air campaign being carried out under favorable weather conditions against a more heavily used logistics target system.

*This memorandum was prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency

**See the footnote to the table for the distinction between effective losses and pilot reports of trucks damaged and destroyed.

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1. Analysis of US bombing operations since 31 March indicates that a total of 759 trucks have been effectively lost in North Vietnam since 1 April, a weekly average of 102 trucks *. This compares to an average effective loss of 50 trucks per week during the first quarter of 1968. Weekly truck losses have been consistently high since the concentration of the bombing effort south of the 19th parallel. Losses have ranged from a low 51 trucks destroyed during the week of 11-17 April to a high of 148 trucks destroyed during the following week. An increasing share of these losses is accounted for by attacks against targets in Route Package 1. During the first quarter of 1968, for example, 93 percent of all truck losses occurred in the three southern route packages, 38 percent in Route Package 1 alone. Since 31 March, 53 percent of all losses have been in Route package 1.

2. The increased truck destruction since 31 March is explained by several factors -- the increased weight of the attack effort, the improvement in weather conditions during the past two months, and the recent higher levels of truck traffic. The fact that truck destruction has increased at an even higher rate than the increase in the number of sorties flown is explained principally by the improving weather conditions during the past two months and the

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increasing levels of truck traffic. There has been no radical improvement in the strike effort required to inflict losses. During the first quarter of 1968, for example, 22.8 attack sorties were flown for each effective truck loss; since the pause this ratio has improved but is still at a rate of 18.2 sorties for each effective loss.

3. The data in the table show fairly sharp variations in the ratio of trucks damaged to trucks destroyed. No significant change in this ratio is apparent however. Since 1 January the ratio has been about 1:1, essentially the same ratio as that obtained during all of 1967.

4. The average number of sightings per week increased from 517 in the first quarter of the year to 890 since the bombing pause, an increase of 72 percent. This is only slightly higher, particularly in view of the improving weather, than the 63 percent increase in the average number of sorties flown per week.

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 North Vietnam Trucks Damaged and Destroyed,
 Effective Losses, Attack Sorties, and Ratios
 (First Quarter 1968 and 1 April - 22 May 1968)

| | | | | | | Ratios | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|---|
| | <u>Sightings</u> | <u>Reported Damaged</u> | <u>Reported Destroyed</u> | <u>Effective Losses *</u> | <u>Attack Sorties ***</u> | <u>Sortie to Effective Losses</u> | <u>Sightings to Effective Losses</u> | <u>Damaged to Destroyed</u> | <u>Sightings to Total Destroyed and Damaged</u> |
| <u>Jan - Mar 1968</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>TOTALS</u> | 6732 | 870 | 580 | 653 | 14,795 | | | | |
| <u>Average Weekly Total</u> | 517 | 67 | 45 | 50 | 1,138 | 22.8:1 | 10.3:1 | 1.5:1 | 4.6:1 |
| <u>1 Apr - 22 May 1968</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>TOTALS</u> | 6614 | 734 | 767 | 759 | 13,792 | | | | |
| <u>Average Weekly Total</u> | 890 | 98 | 104 | 102 | 1,856 | 18.2:1 | 8.7:1 | .9:1 | 4.4:1 |
| <u>Total Per Week **</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| 4-10 April | 572 | 80 | 87 | 84 | 1,687 | 20 :1 | 6.8:1 | .9:1 | 3.4:1 |
| 11-17 April | 490 | 30 | 58 | 51 | 1,432 | 28 :1 | 9.6:1 | .5:1 | 5.6:1 |
| 18-24 April | 1362 | 112 | 159 | 148 | 1,810 | 12.2:1 | 9.2:1 | .7:1 | 5.0:1 |
| 25 Apr - 1 May | 844 | 119 | 92 | 98 | 1,790 | 18.3:1 | 8.6:1 | 1.3:1 | 4.0:1 |
| 2- 8 May | 1214 | 177 | 123 | 137 | 2,170 | 15.8:1 | 8.9:1 | 1.4:1 | 4.0:1 |
| 9-15 May | 504 | 81 | 84 | 84 | 1,881 | 22.4:1 | 6.0:1 | 1.0:1 | 3.1:1 |
| 16-22 May | 1520 | 117 | 141 | 135 | 2,183 | 16.2:1 | 11.3:1 | .8:1 | 4.8:1 |

* The formula for computing effective losses used by CIA and DIA is as follows: 75 percent of those trucks reported destroyed and 25 percent of those reported damaged are considered to be effective losses and are deducted from the inventory.

** No data is included for 1-3 April. The reporting period of Thursday through Wednesday is used in order to provide up-to-date data to a large number of consumers at weekend conferences.

*** Data from Table 30A, Southeast Asia Statistical Summary, Directorate of Statistical Services, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

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